

BUREAU OF RECLAMATION

WATER EDUCATION FOUNDATION

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BAY DELTA CONSERVATION PLAN MEETINGS

PUBLIC COMMENTS ONLY

FOR:

SAN DIEGO

San Diego:

Chair: Our first speaker will be Tom Warnum from the San Diego Economic Corporation followed by Mark Weston at Helix's Water District and followed by Tim Quinn from Aqua.

Mr. Warnum: Good evening lady's and gentlemen. My name is Tom Warnum and I'm Chair of the San Diego Economic Corporation. I also have the honor of being a member of, or Director of the San Diego Water Authority, which I have the honor of serving as the Chair of the Administrative and Finance Committee. So, with all of that all of us say hello. Lady's and gentlemen, simply put the bay delta is broken. It's broken as a sustainable habitat for fish and wildlife and it's broken as a water delivery system. The age of its levees and their growing vulnerability to breaches make the entire system a statewide disaster waiting to happen. While that's a simple assessment to make, putting together a plan to address the bay delta's problem is far from simple. I applaud the considerable time and effort you and the other agencies involved are contributing to this plan. And, to its environmental review and process to make sure it gets done right. This plan is not a silver bullet that will address all of the bay delta problems and issues, nor does it intend to be. But, I strongly support

this plan because it is on the right track for addressing the most pressing and critical issues impacting the delta. And, in turn the reasons like San Diego County. Given the fact that 25 million Californians from the bay area to San Diego rely to some degree on water deliveries from the bay delta, addressing water conveyance must be a top priority. This plan realizes the equal importance of rebuilding the water conveyance system as habitats are restored. The stakes for California could not be greater. Reduced bay delta water reliability will take a toll on San Diego's economy and competitiveness. It will also take a toll on the economy and competitiveness of the entire state. If that is allowed to happen, reduced tax revenues will further strain already strapped state and local government resources and services. That could spread the pain to every man, woman and child living in this state. That clearly is not the future that any of us desire. The success of this plan is critical for all of us. Without it our water system and our economy will become increasing subject to the mercy of whether, and to regulatory and judicial restrictions. We need to take action and we need to take action now. I urge you to move this plan forward in a timely manner. Thank you again for the opportunity to speak.

Chair: Nicely done, thank you. You did good.

Mr. Warnum: And again, thank you all.

Mr. Weston: My name is Mark Weston. I'm the General Manager for Helix Water District. Helix's Water District serves 260 thousand people their drinking water everyday. We're located just east of San Diego; headquarters are in the city of La Mesa. I'm speaking today as the General Manager and I want to speak to the reliability of water that we import from the delta. We use about, 85% of our water is imported, the two sources of the Colorado River and the delta. Due to a variety of changes in hydrology, climate change, legal decisions and environmental issues Southern California has lost one million acre feet of reliable water supply. That's out of a total water supply of about three million acre feet. So, I as a General Manager who will be serving people their drinking water every day know that our reliability is greatly decreased. The delta is broken. We have, it is broken biologically and it's broken hydro-logically and, it's broken as a flood control system. We strongly support a solution in which the biology and the hydrology and the hydraulics are balanced. The State of California relies far too greatly on the delta working correctly. We as residents in Southern California rely greatly on the

water supply. The economy of California is dependent on the reliable water supply from Northern California, and we can no longer continue to believe that the delta will work in the future. Anyone who's been in the delta knows that the levees are substandard and will fail. All analysis says that the delta levees will fail in the future. That will be a disaster to us as water suppliers and it's going to be a disaster to the biology of the delta. So, we strongly support a balance approach to solving the problems in the delta. We also strongly support methods that will provide reliable water conveyance around the delta so that we in Southern California and the economy that's based in Southern California will be able to continue and serve the public. We have over 18 million people in the metropolitan service area, and I've heard anywhere from 23 to 25 million people depend on water being conveyed through the delta. We need to solve that problem. Thank you.

Mr. Weston: My name is Mark Weston, General Manager of Helix Water District. I'm speaking for Tim Quinn, Executive Director of Aqua. I'm an Aqua Board Member. I've been asked to provide these comments and an Aqua statement. Aqua is the Association of California Water Agencies. Time is not on our side. The need for a more sustainable

water system has never been more urgent. We have to invest in sustainability. We need a comprehensive solution that improves the sustainability of the system. We have to invest in the environmental integrity of the system so it can meet the co-equal objectives of protecting the aquatic environment and providing the reliable high quality water our economy needs. Comprehensive means comprehensive. We also have to invest in water use efficiency, water recycling and other strategies, and expand our surface and groundwater storage capacity. Impacts already are being felt up and down the State of California. San Diego area is already feeling the effects of reduced water deliveries through the delta. Without a comprehensive delta fix, shortages will continue to ripple through the south lands economy causing water rates to rise, and effecting jobs, agriculture, construction and other economic activity. No action doesn't mean that there will be no impacts. The environmental review process for BDCP will study the impacts of four potential actions including the no action alternative. No action carries its own set of impacts. The environmental review process must assess the ways in which the system will continue to degrade putting both species and our water supplies at risk if we simply

continue the status quo. Alternatives carry high costs and we accept that. San Diego's economy runs on water that is conveyed through the delta as well as pumped hundreds of miles from the Colorado River. Alternatives to these sources such as stepped up recycling and desalination require energy and also carry environmental impacts. We strongly urge the activities of the study to occur as quickly as possible and we need to impress upon the people performing the study that this is absolutely urgent, and we have no time to waste. We all believe we will be in some sort of mandatory water reduction as early as next year. Thank you.

Chair: Thank you. The next three speakers are, Dennis Majors from the Metropolitan Water District, followed by Fern Steiner from the San Diego County Water Authority, followed by Ruben Barrales from the San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce.

Mr. Majors: Thank you. I am Dennis Majors. I am the Program Manager with the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California. The Metropolitan provides water from the delta through its state water contract and the Colorado River through its Colorado River aqueduct to 18 million people in Southern California in six areas. We've been actively involved in the BDC program the very beginning and I

just wanted to thank all of you for coming here today. It's a long trip down here and I appreciate it. The success of this process though, the BDCP is essential in order to create a sustainable eco-system in the delta and a reliable water system in California. Now, the objective of the BDCP is not solely about eco-system restoration or improvements to water quality, or improvement to water reliability or, protections against unique seismic risks in the delta. A successful plan has to address all of these collectively. Metropolitan has built a network of surface reservoirs and ground water banking programs in order to capture water an average in wet years to relieve the pressure on the eco-system in dry years. The strategy is to take water on natures terms, and Metropolitan needs a more flexible and adaptable water supply system in the delta to do that. Without having that flexibility we can not move water in the storage when we need it, we have real problems in a multi-year drought for example, and part of that was talked about here. The new water for growth will come from water use efficiency efforts such as conservation, voluntary water transfers and new local supplies such as recycling. However, the delta will remain a baseline source of supply. While Metropolitan's storage and delivery systems provide flexibility of

when we draw the delta supplies, both quantity and quality are vital. The BDCP has rightly placed as co-equal the objectives of a restored eco-system in a reliable water supply co-equal objectives. We think that's great. This effort is one of the most complex and most important tasks of habitat planning in the nation. It must succeed. Metropolitan looks forward to remaining actively engaged in the process and on commenting on the various alternatives that come forth. A healthy delta eco-system is essential for water supply reliability and for the state economy, and I want to thank you for the opportunity to speak.

Chair: Thank you.

Ms. Steiner: Good evening. I'm Fern Steiner and I'm the Chair of the San Diego County Water Authority. The Water Authority serves San Diego region as a wholesale supplier of water from the Colorado River and Northern California. The Water Authority works through its 24 member agencies to provide a safe reliable water supply to support the regions \$157 billion dollar economy and quality of life for three million residents. We all know the ecological, structural and water supply challenges that are faced in the bay delta. Developing and implementing a plan that restores habitat's and provides for the

protection and restoration of water supplies is imperative. It's imperative not only for the health of the delta which is critical, but for the well being of our entire state. When you look at the map, as you know we're way down here, the furthest end away from that water supply, actually from both water supplies and yet approximately 34% of our water is used, that's used in our area that comes from the bay delta. So, it's a critical part of our supply portfolio. The Water Authority's been very aggressive in trying to diversify its water supply here in San Diego, and we've developed a long term plan that we hope will meet our future water demands and maximize our protection from drought and other supply restrictions. We're working with our member retail agencies to develop new local water supplies and to expand conservation and recycling. We have water transfer agreements in place that will significantly increase our water deliveries from the Imperial Valley in 2021 and for generations to follow. We also have implemented a capital improvement plan to increase our emergency storage, our carryover storage and our overall water supply deliver capacity. And, while these are prudent and responsible investments by our agencies and by our Water Authority, we still are dependent on getting that water

from the bay delta. And, we still need to have that work in order for us to be able to supply water to our member agencies and to our customers. Therefore, it's critically important for the BDCP to keep water system reliability an equal priority with restoring the ecosystems as it moves forward. It's also vital that the plan moves forward expeditiously. We're already having ripple effects here in San Diego County from the pumping restrictions, and we truly believe that a potentially severe water supply shortages loom on our states horizon. So, there's no time to waste. I urge the agencies involved in this that you all, to meet that goal to have that plan approved by 2010. And, I thank you for the opportunity to speak and we look forward to working with you on this project. And, at any time that we can help you the San Diego Water Authority will do so. Thank you.

Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Barrales: Good evening. My name is Ruben Barrales. I'm the President of the San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce. Thank you for coming to San Diego. Feel free to stay and shop, and take advantage of our many amenities here. But, we're actually very glad to have you in San Diego. I wish more San Diegan's were aware that you

were here. So, on behalf of the business community I wanted to let you know that obviously water reliability is very important to us. We also understand though that the sustainability of the bay delta is vital as well. And, we have sent our policy committees up to the bay delta to see for themselves, and want to impress upon you that we understand that balance is important that we hope that as you move forward that that balance is maintained. Obviously we need to sustain our environment. We know it's critical to addressing environmental issues, but at the same time please don't lose fact that water reliability is critical for San Diego. Not just our economy but for the people that live here. And, also reiterating what was just said, keeping on the time line if at all possible is important as well because reliability and sustainability are important. But, we need a certainty in the sense of understanding what we're facing so that we can move forward together and address the issues related to water for San Diego and the rest of the state. Thank you very much.

Chair: Thank you. Okay, the next three speakers are Eric Larson from the San Diego Farm Bureau, Faith Picking from BIOCUM, and Sue Varty the President from the Olivenhain Municipal Water District.

Mr. Larson: Hello, I'm Eric Larson, Executive Director of the San Diego County Farm Bureau and, thank you for taking the time to come here and listen to what we have to say. Outside of our community it's little known that San Diego County probably boasts the 12 largest farm economies amongst all counties in the United States. This has been accomplished by becoming a leading region in the cultivation of high valued crops. This happened through steady growth and investments since the arrival of imported water to our county. With the arrival of that imported water, farmers were able to move beyond the confines of ground water basins and local surface water to such exceptional production areas as Valley Center in Fallbrook. Today, farms are an important part of San Diego County's fabric providing 5.4 billion in economic strength, fresh local farm products, a hedge against continued urban expansion and the environmental values of open space, habitat, and tens of thousands of acres of trees and shrubs. For our farmers to continue to be a part of San Diego County, we require the continuance of a dependable source of imported water. The health of the Sacramento, San Joaquin delta will directly affect the future farming in this community. Protecting the eco-system and avoiding collapse will also protect the farmers of

San Diego County. Somewhere today in San Diego County avocado trees were stumped. In some places citrus trees were cut down and some place else nurseries cut back production in order to comply with the current mandatory 30% reduction in irrigation water use by farmers. Those will serve as short term methods for meeting the reduction in water supplies. But, if long term solutions are not found, the farmers will not be able to sustain their livelihoods. When that happens San Diego County just might lose part of its heritage and charm. We need to harvest the wet years of California and store that water above and below ground. We need to remove impediments, both natural and regulatory to moving water through the delta. We need a delta eco-system that works. We need a comprehensive environmental plan for the delta that the bay delta conservation plan can provide, thank you.

Chair: Thank you.

Ms. Picking: Good evening. My name is Faith Picking and I'm the Public Policy Manager of BIOCOM, which is the largest trade organization for Southern California Life Science Industry. BIOCOM has more than 550 member companies in Southern California. The Life Science Industry in San Diego County alone contributes 8.5 billion dollars to

the economy. Thank you for coming to San Diego tonight and giving me the time to speak to you on behalf of my organization, and on the development of the Bay Delta Conservation Plan. BIOCOM was born in the early 1990's in the midst of the devastating drought. It was born because the Live Science Industry recognized an urgent need to come together and push for actions that would enhance our regions water reliability. Today we once again see need for urgent action. But, this time it's not only for San Diego Counties' water reliability but its California's water system. The issues facing the bay delta are tough and complex, but they need to be addressed and addressed quickly. California's water system can not work without a plan that creates more stable and sustainable delta. And, if California's water systems break down, industries such as ours are at risk of breaking down as well. We support the Bay Delta Conservation Plan because it maps out a comprehensive approach for solving the deltas most critical issues. It does so in a way that puts restoring water supply reliability on equal footing with restoring habitats for fish and wildlife. It is a foundation of a long term solution for meeting the states future water needs. We recommend the Bay Delta Conservation Plan collaborate effort to date among

water agencies and environmental organizations, and State and Federal agencies, and urge your steering committee to make every effort to keep the plan on track for approval by 2010. Over the years BIOCOM has strongly advocated for sound water policies and programs. These include programs, enhanced regional water conservation efforts and expand the use of reclaimed water. Many of our member water companies have embraced conservation and use, and the use of reclaimed water for years. And, many more are taking similar steps to do so now. The Life Science community knows that finding more efficient ways to those who use of the previous resources is the right thing to do for your community and our future. In an ultra competitive industry and one of the few true growth industries in our state, and with many other states funding millions to attract our companies and research institutes, water reliability in California is essential to the survival of the Life Science community. We need your help and leadership to push forward a comprehensive bay delta plan that meets the critical water needs of our industry and our state. Thank you so much for your time.

Chair: Thank you. And, unless we don't have anybody else to sign up to speak, our last speaker for the night is Judy Roland with the Wilderness Society.

Female: She can go ahead.

Chair: Okay. Oh, Sue Varty, yes.

Ms. Varty: Yes, I'm Sue Varty; I'm with the Olievenhain Municipal Water District. We are a retail agency. I am actually an elected official. I represent the rate payers who will bear the costs of all of the things that we're talking about today. We don't, rate payers now, don't object to everything that you're doing. But, we would like to be involved in the planning. We would like to be involved in the public discourse on how much is this gonna cost. We need to know every step of the way what you're gonna expect from us. The Met service area actually has 54% of the states population. 54% of the states rate payers are going to pay for what it is that you come up with. We need to be part of this process. Thank you.

Chair: Thank you. And now Judy Roland, Wilderness Society.

Ms. Roland: I recognize that last name. I have to say that I originally was conscripted to come because my sister is speaking. But, you know, should I be a plant, what should I say, but after listening to everyone

I have several comments. I am a life long resident of San Diego. I was born and raised here actually 64 years ago today I was born here. And, while I've been away this has always been my home. And, I'm speaking not just to you, well, I'm speaking to you but I'm speaking to everyone here. Since I'm the only one that doesn't represent, they asked for some organization, I belong to all of those and what I see is, I'm real impressed that you all came. All of the people that I've been reading about in the newspaper, in the Union for what, the last 3 or 4 years a lot, and before that a good deal. There's no question, we have always had this problem. This is a desert type region and there is no question we need the water. But, I don't see anybody; I had to speak on behalf of and, the eco-system, and the preservation of the fish and the wildlife. Now, you may not, I'm not as eloquent, but, I am going to chastise everyone because I can that there are a lot of you who are around when Jerry Brown was the Governor. And, I don't know if you remember that he had either a referendum or a proposition on the ballot, something would be, you remember this? And, this was about 25 years ago, I can't remember my month. My mind is not as good at these things as it used to be. But, I remember, I hadn't thought about it until I started

getting all of the information about it, and I voted for it. It was soundly defeated. People simply weren't interested in what was going to happen now. And, for those of you who were around that had been interested in this, and I think some of you are equally equal to my age or almost, that now it's happened. And now everyone is crying emergency, and I have to say we could have avoided this and I'm sorry that we didn't. But, I am very pleased to see that you've had these hearings, you're having these hearings and that the people whose names I've heard are here. I'm not sure whose missing. The only thing I haven't heard is Sandag practically, so I guess all of you represent those parts of the cities that are involved. So, I do follow it but I truly believe that we also need to preserve the fish that use these waters and the animals who live on the land and need it to. So, I'm glad you've all voiced this. But, it will impact what we have to do here in San Diego and all of Southern California. So, that's it.

Chair: Thank you. Well, that concludes the public comment portion of the meeting. The team will continue to be here for a few more minutes to answer any questions that you have that came out of the presentation itself. So, if you want to just spend some more time in speaking with the project team you're welcome to. Otherwise, thank

you so much for coming and don't forget, the deadline for comments
is May 30th.